Aviation Net

What is it?
Aviation Net is a military Community of Practice (CoP). It is manifested as a web-based electronic forum that resides behind Army Knowledge Online (AKO) and provides Army Aviation Soldiers with a secure collaborative environment for the sharing and transfer of knowledge and experience. As a facilitated professional forum, Aviation Net captures "knowledge at the edge of the network" and functions as a "bottom up" source of experiential knowledge from the field that provides the potential for enhanced realistic training and combat readiness. It has been formed by active duty and Reserve military personnel, DOD civilians, and approved contractors. On a 24/7 basis, the membership continuously engages in the process of social learning. The system enables facilitated discussions that exchange experiential knowledge and innovative ideas relating to current and future challenges affecting the aviation community.

What has Army Aviation done?
In June 2008, the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) directed all Centers of Excellence (CoE) to establish Warfighter Forums. Accordingly, the U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence (USAACE) established the Aviation Warfighters' Forum (AvWfF) on AKO, the Army's program of record. Although the AKO "Appian" software has many capabilities, its inability to efficiently host and moderate synchronous social forums through AKO was identified. To augment the capability of AvWfF, the Aviation Net professional forum was created and launched in December 2008. Aviation Net is hosted within the Battle Command Knowledge System (BCKS) Web site, in company with 41 other professional forums reflecting numerous branches and disciplines within the U.S. Army and totaling more than 155,000 members. Aviation Net can be accessed directly through the BCKS portal:

https://forums.bcks.army.mil/secure/CommunityBrowser.aspx?id=690446&lang=en-US
or alternatively from within the AvWfF AKO website.

Aviation Net has a growing membership, now approaching 1,400. It is currently administered from the USAACE Knowledge Management Office (KMO.) It supports USAACE's various KM initiatives, primarily with a "bottom up" collaborative methodology. The Army's new doctrine on Knowledge Management (KM) Field Manual 6-01.1, Knowledge Management Section, defines KM as "the art of creating, organizing, applying, and transferring knowledge to facilitate situational understanding and decision making." To fully enable this concept, a forum facilitator is employed to manage the day-to-day operations of the forum and ensure compliance with guidance prescribed by the sponsoring BCKS policies. The principle resources of the forum are moderated discussions that connect members to subject matter experts. The forum facilitator enforces operations security (OPSEC), and reviews and manages forum content and discussions to ensure relevancy and accuracy.

What continued efforts does Army Aviation have planned for the future?
Army Aviation is planning to expand and hopes to eventually engage all directorates and agencies world-wide in the Army Aviation community. However, as discussed below, this will only be possible with visible USAACE leadership support.

Why is this important to the Army and Army Aviation?

Professional forums that have sponsorship and active support at a high level within the organization have a high probability of success. These supported forums continuously generate innovation and increase the social behavior traits that lead to successful leadership competencies and problem resolution. Individually and organizationally created briefings, instructional presentations, lessons learned, and standing operating procedures (SOPs) can be posted and downloaded in near real time. Access to knowledgeable and experienced subject matter experts, who are willing to share advice and assistance, can significantly shorten learning curves. Participation on Aviation Net can reduce the time needed to resolve problems and challenges and accelerate the Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) cycle.

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